

division of neighborhood services



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Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program *Fact Sheet*

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), also known as the Fuel Assistance Program, provides eligible households with help for winter heating bills. The program pays benefits up to a fixed amount based on household income. An additional benefit is available to eligible households having a higher than average energy burden. The Bureau of Energy Programs (BEP) within the DHCD's Division of Neighborhood Services has administrative and fiscal oversight of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) funded program. The Fuel Assistance program is operated locally by a network of 22 community based organizations across the Commonwealth under contract with DHCD/BEP.

How it works

The Fuel Assistance Program is designed to assist low-income households with winter heating bills as a step towards financial stability. The program operates between November 1 and April 30 each year. Local administering agencies determine household eligibility based on annualized income and household size. The agencies make payments for heating bills directly to the primary heat source vendor (oil, propane, gas or electric utility, wood or coal dealer) up to a fixed maximum benefit. Special provisions are made for households whose heat is included in their rent and/or who reside in publicly subsidized housing.

Who is eligible

Households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level are eligible for the Fuel Assistance Program. Homeowners and renters are both eligible.

Application process

The head of household must apply to the local administering agency each year. The
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agency mails a recertification application to households determined eligible the previous year and the applicant is responsible for providing current information. First-time applicants must apply in person.

Provisions can be made for disabled individuals including home visits when necessary. Applicants are responsible for providing household income information, identification, verification of their address, the name of their primary heat source vendor and bill and account number for their electric utility for discount purposes.

Grants

Household benefits for program year 2002-2003 range up to \$665 depending on income, historic energy use and housing status. Actual benefit amounts vary somewhat from year to year dependent on the availability of federal funding and the anticipated number of applicants and therefore cannot be guaranteed.

For more information

Please contact the Division of Neighborhood Services at (617) 727-7004 or (800)635-8175.